

Tough Questions to Ask Your Board

Do you and your team want to raise the kind of money that not only funds your work – but also actually transforms your organization’s mission potential and reach? If so, what would it take to pull mega fundraising results?

Here are the **cage-rattling questions** about fundraising strategy that we ask our clients:

1 Can we be honest about what’s working and what’s not working in fundraising?

Protecting special programs holds everyone back. *Creating an atmosphere of openness and honesty is essential if you want creativity and new ideas – and mega fundraising success.*

2 Can we make fundraising decisions based on data and not personal opinions?

We find, unfortunately, that many leadership teams make decisions based on personal opinions or preferences, not on facts or data. Instead, set your fundraising strategy based on data and research. *This is a must if you want to reach new, mega fundraising goals.*

3 Are we willing to ditch unproductive fundraising programs?

Where are the time-wasting, unproductive fundraising programs in your organization? Can you and your team speak honestly and create a discussion about eliminating them? *Be willing to eliminate fundraising programs that don’t pull their weight. Never waste your organization’s precious resources of time, energy and money in places where it doesn’t pay off.*

4 Are we willing to set dollar goals that are backed up with a plan?

The way to achieve fundraising growth is through a thoughtful annual fundraising plan. So, craft one with your board. *Remember: it’s impossible to achieve great results without a detailed, calendared plan and strategy.*

5 What would happen if we invested more in our fundraising program?

If your organization invested more in fundraising, you would raise more money to fund your mission. The ROI of fundraising is well established. When organizations invest, the money raised will pay back the investment plus bring in a significant return. *Fundraising is not a cost center. Instead, it generates revenue.*



For more resources on creating a high performing board, scan here.



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Could we encourage risk-taking with a fundraising venture fund?

Venture investing in fundraising can be a smart strategy that yields substantial revenue. Consider that your endowment is earning an annual 4% return back to your organization.

Compare that to understanding that most fundraising programs yield a return on investment of 300-400%. For example, if you spent \$300k on fundraising, you would expect to raise a million or even more. And that’s an annual return that’s repeated every year. If you borrowed from your endowment and invested in expanding fundraising – you’d see a significant return, **plus you’d pay the principal back into your endowment.**

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Can our entire organization embrace fundraising as a mission goal?

It takes every single person in the organization to be on board – from the folks answering the phones, to the CEO, to the board. Everyone needs to celebrate fundraising as an integral part of their mission.

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Can our entire organization embrace and honor donors as important to our mission?

Does your organization honor its donors as an important organizational asset? This is the first step toward a true organizational culture of philanthropy. When an organization celebrates and honors donors, then maximum fundraising is truly possible.

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Could we possibly set aggressive, breathtaking goals?

Aggressive goals force everyone to shift and work differently – from the administrative staff to the board members. This is what a capital campaign does for an organization – it shifts the energy level, raises the stakes, and focuses everyone on an exciting path ahead.

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What would this take from everyone to make it happen?

This is a question we fundraising consultants often ask when an organization wants to step out into the unknown with a capital campaign initiative. This deeper conversation encourages self-reflection, and challenges old thinking and habits. This question opens the door for true change and innovation.

Bottom line: Ask These Honest Questions About Fundraising Strategy

These seem like huge questions to think about - because they are huge. They get down, underneath the day-to-day, to underlying organizational culture and history.

But if your leaders can be honest about addressing these issues, you’ll foster an innovative, supportive environment. And, you’ll be on your way to amazing fundraising results that can transform your organization’s work out in the world.



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